

Indiana State Department of Health Injury Prevention Program

2 North Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204
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Lawn Mower Injuries



Sharpening Your Knowledge about Lawn Mower Injuries

The Facts

Health experts estimate that between 1,700 and 2,000 children in the United States are injured each year by riding power lawn mowers.

Power mower-related injuries frequently occur among young children and are more common among males. Injuries to preschoolers are particularly severe.

In Indiana, 30 percent of the 2002 cases involved children below 16 years of age, who represent only 20 percent of the population.

Many of the injuries from mower blade contact require amputation of portions of the foot or toes. These injuries frequently require multiple surgical operations to repair the body parts affected, and an extensive rehabilitation program to regain body function.

How Do the Injuries Happen?

- Young children can fall or slip into the operating mower blade while playing and running nearby.
- Children can be injured while operating the mower themselves when too young to do so, or preschoolers and school-age children who fall off a mower while riding with an adult.
- Children can be injured when mowers are placed into reverse and the operator is not aware a child is behind them.
- Rocks or other objects can be thrown by the mower and strike a child, especially in the eyes or the head.

Prevention Tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics

- While the lawn is being mowed, keep others, especially young children, away to ensure their safety.

- Do not allow children younger than 14 to use ride-on mowers. Do not allow children younger than 12 to use walk-behind mowers.
- Use only a power mower with a control that stops the mower if the handle is let go, and be certain this control is never disconnected.
- Make sure that an adult adjusts the blade settings, to set the wheel height or to dislodge debris, and only when the mower is off and the spark plug is removed or disconnected.
- Prevent injuries from flying objects, like stones or toys, by picking up objects from the lawn before mowing begins. Use a collection bag for grass clippings or a plate that covers the opening where cut grass is released.
- Wear sturdy shoes (not sandals or sneakers) and protective eyewear while operating the mower.
- Start and refuel mowers outdoors, not in a garage or shed. Mowers should be refueled with the motor turned off and cool.

Want more information?

For more information, contact the Injury Prevention Program
at the Indiana State Department of Health at 317-233-1325.

Or, visit our Website at www.statehealth.in.gov